

Earlier this spring, Congress passed and the President signed into law legislation that gives Americans more control and choices over their health care.

In 1912, President Teddy Roosevelt said that every American deserves health care. After nearly a hundred years and work of Republican and Democratic Presidents alike, Congress made good on this promise.

The enacted legislation is intended to extend health insurance to 32 million uninsured Americans and end the worst insurance company abuses.

And the Congressional Budget Office has said the new law also cuts the deficit by \$143 billion over the next decade and is expected to cut \$1.2 trillion the following ten years.

### **WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?**

#### ***Small Businesses***

Under the new law small businesses will receive tax credits this year to help afford insurance for their employees. The credits will cover up to 35% of health costs paid by small businesses and will increase to as much as 50% in 2014.

The IRS recently sent more than 10,000 postcards to small businesses in and around the 4th Congressional District that are eligible for this tax credit.

#### ***Seniors***

Many seniors who need costly prescription drugs face a coverage gap under Medicare's prescription drug benefit program. This gap makes some seniors pay 100% of their prescription

drug costs part of the year while still paying premiums.

The new law helps these seniors who face the coverage gap this year by providing rebates of \$250 to help them afford prescription drugs. Next year, seniors in the coverage gap will receive a 50% discount on brand name prescription drugs.

By 2020, the bill will completely close this gap so that seniors never have to pay 100% of their drug costs again.

Under the new law, seniors in Medicare will receive certain free preventive care beginning January 1, 2011.

### ***Children***

For plans issued after September 23, 2010, insurance companies can no longer deny covering sick children. They must provide affordable coverage for children with pre-existing conditions.

For plans issued after September 23, 2010, parents can keep their sons and daughters on their insurance plans until their 26th birthdays.

Children and young adults are less expensive to insure than adults, and many insurance companies are voluntarily complying with these provisions earlier than required by law.

### ***Women***

The new law ends the common insurance company practice of charging women higher monthly premiums than men for comparable coverage.

Women also greatly benefit from the legislation's ban on denying coverage because of pre-existing conditions. Some insurers have denied coverage on this basis simply if a woman has ever been pregnant or ever had a c-section. Or, even worse, some insurers have denied coverage to women who have been victims of domestic violence, claiming it's a pre-existing condition.

### ***Families***

Health care bills are the most common cause of family bankruptcy. This legislation gives families a greater sense of security.

It eliminates lifetime insurance plan benefit limits, which have allowed insurance companies to stop paying for otherwise covered procedures. This has greatly impacted families who have high health care costs due to long-term conditions or expensive care, such as cancer treatments. This becomes effective for plan years beginning September 23, 2010.

This new law also ends rescissions so that insurance companies will no longer be able to drop coverage for people just because they get too sick.